

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling an appliance, the method comprising:  
identifying an unrecognized appliance for which the mobile computing device lacks a user preference; and  
automatically applying with the mobile computing device a user preference, obtained from an external source, to the unrecognized appliance.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the automatically applying a user preference comprises obtaining the user preference from a database of user preferences wherein the database is located in at least one of the appliance, the mobile computing device, and an external source.
3. A method for controlling an appliance, the method comprising:  
identifying a first appliance with a mobile computing device;  
assessing a sensory control profile of the first appliance;  
identifying a sensory control profile of a second appliance that is similar to the sensory control profile of the first appliance; and  
applying with the mobile computing device a user preference of the second appliance to the first appliance.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein assessing a sensory control profile comprises:  
querying the first appliance with the mobile computing device to determine which human sensory capabilities the first appliance interacts with.
5. A method for controlling an appliance, the method comprising:  
identifying the first appliance with a mobile computing device;  
accessing historical user preferences of the first appliance that were last applied by a prior mobile computing device; and  
applying the historical user preferences to the first appliance with the mobile computing device.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein accessing the historical user preferences comprises:

identifying and using user preferences corresponding a longest single duration of use of the first appliance.

7. A method for controlling an unrecognized appliance, the method comprising:

identifying with a mobile computing device the unrecognized appliance;

instructing the mobile computing device to enter a play-and-learn mode

including:

manually manipulating features of the unrecognized appliance until preferred control settings of the unrecognized appliance are achieved;

recognizing a status of the features of the unrecognized appliance with the mobile computing device;

storing and applying the preferred controls settings of the features of the unrecognized appliance as a user preference of the mobile computing device for the unrecognized appliance.

8. A method of controlling a plurality of appliances comprising:

identifying with a mobile computing device a first appliance of the plurality of appliances as a master appliance;

applying with the mobile computing device a user preference set of the master appliance to all other appliances of the plurality of appliances.

9. A method of controlling an appliance comprising:

setting with a mobile computing device a default user preference for each human sensory parameter; and

applying with the mobile computing device the default user preference to each appliance.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein setting the default user preference comprises:
- setting an auditory user preference for an auditory sensory parameter including a maximum volume, a minimum volume, and an equalizer setting.
11. The method of claim 9 wherein setting the default user preference comprises:
- setting an visual user preference for a visual sensory parameter including a color profile setting and a light intensity setting.
12. A method of controlling an appliance comprising:
- establishing a communication link between a mobile computing device and the appliance;
  - performing the following steps automatically and transparently to the user of the mobile computing device, including:
    - determining whether the mobile computing device includes a user preference for the appliance and applying a known user preference for the appliance if it is available;
    - in the event that the user preference for the appliance is unknown, connecting the appliance to the internet to access a database of user preferences for known appliances that are similar to the appliance;
    - selecting the user preference based on the similarity of the mobile computing device owner to other mobile computing device owners that have the same appliance; and
    - applying with the mobile computing device the user preference selected from the database to the appliance.
13. A mobile computing device comprising:
- a controller configured for applying user preferences to an appliance;
  - a wireless communicator configured for establishing wireless communication between the mobile computing device and an appliance; and

an user preference auto manager configured for automatically applying user preferences to appliances that are unrecognized by the mobile computing device.

14. A user preference database comprising:  
a plurality of appliance listings;  
a plurality of user preference listings; and  
wherein an association between user preferences and appliances is based on at least one of a similarity of owners of mobile computer devices and a sensory control profile associated with each appliance listing.

15. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling an appliance, the method comprising:  
identifying an unrecognized appliance for which the mobile computing device lacks a user preference; and  
automatically applying with the mobile computing device a user preference, obtained from an external source, to the unrecognized appliance.

16. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling an appliance, the method comprising:  
identifying a first appliance with a mobile computing device;  
assessing a sensory control profile of the first appliance;  
identifying a sensory control profile of a second appliance that is similar to the sensory control profile of the first appliance; and  
applying with the mobile computing device a user preference of the second appliance to the first appliance.

17. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling an appliance, the method comprising:  
identifying the first appliance with a mobile computing device;  
accessing historical user preferences of the first appliance that were last applied by a prior mobile computing device; and

applying the historical user preferences to the first appliance with the mobile computing device.

18. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling an unrecognized appliance, the method comprising:

identifying with the mobile computing device the unrecognized appliance;

instructing the mobile computing device to enter a play-and-learn mode including:

manually manipulating features of the unrecognized appliance until preferred control settings of the unrecognized appliance are achieved;

recognizing a status of the features of the unrecognized appliance with the mobile computing device;

storing and applying the preferred controls settings of the features of the unrecognized appliance as a user preference of the mobile computing device for the unrecognized appliance.

19. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling a plurality of appliances, the method comprising:

identifying with the mobile computing device a first appliance of the plurality of appliances as a master appliance;

applying with the mobile computing device a user preference set of the master appliance to all other appliances of the plurality of appliances.

20. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling an appliance, the method comprising:

setting with the mobile computing device a default user preference for each human sensory parameter; and

applying with the mobile computing device the default user preference to each appliance.

21. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling an appliance, the method comprising:
- establishing a communication link between a mobile computing device and the appliance;
  - performing the following steps automatically and transparently to the user of the mobile computing device, including:
    - determining whether the mobile computing device includes a user preference for the appliance and applying a known user preference for the appliance if it is available;
    - in the event that the user preference for the appliance is unknown, connecting the appliance to the internet to access a database of user preferences for known appliances that are similar to the appliance;
    - selecting the user preference based on the similarity of the mobile computing device owner to other mobile computing device owners that have the same appliance; and
    - applying with the mobile computing device the user preference selected from the database to the appliance.